

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 00665 271821Z
ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 665

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: CANELLAS EXPLAINS REASONS FOR CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC TEAM'S
REFUSAL TO JOIN "CENTRO DEMOCRATICO"

REF: MADRID 503

1. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC "TEAM" LEADER ANTON CANELLAS (CAT-
ALAN UDC), ACCOMPANIED BY RECENT IVP GRANTEE ANTONIO VAZ-
QUEZ, OF URIZ GIMENEZ' "IZQUIERDA DEMOCRATICA," CAME TO SEE
ME JANUARY 26 CONCERNING A PLANNED VISIT TO THE US BY A CD
DELEGATION (SEPTTEL--NOTAL). DURING OUR CONVERSATION, CANEL-
LAS AND VAZQUEZ MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE CURRENT
POLITICAL SITUATION.

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PAGE 02 MADRID 00665 271821Z

2. THE CD TEAM HAS DECIDED THAT IT WILL NOT JOIN THE ABORN-
ING "CENTRO DEMOCRATICO" (REFTEL). IT WILL INSTEAD PRE-
SENT ITS OWN SLATE IN THE LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS, POSSIB-
LY IN COMBINATION WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC FSD OR FER-
NANDEZ ORDONEZ/LASUEN. A BROADER COALITION IN THE UP-
PER HOUSE CONTEST REACHING THE "CENTRO DEMOCRATICO" RE-
MAINS A POSSIBILITY. (COMMENT: MOST OF THE OPPOSITION

ADVOCATES DIFFERENT TACTICS FOR THE TWO CONTESTS, THE QUESTION CONTINUES TO BE EXACTLY WHAT FORM THESE TACTICS WILL TAKE.)

3. THE TEAM HAS REAFFIRMED ITS DECISION NOT TO MERGE WITH THE REGIME-CONNECTED GROUPS INVOLVED IN "CENTRO DEMOCRATICO" (THE CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UDE AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT, PARTIDO POPULAR) NOT IN AN ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN THE TEAM'S "POLITICAL VIRGINITY" (AS CHARGED BY SOME DETRACTORS), BUT AS THE RESULT OF ITS ANALYSIS OF ITS POTENTIAL ELECTORATE AND OF THE LIKELY POLITICAL EFFECTS OF ANY BROAD CENTRIST ALLIANCE. THE TEAM'S LEADERS BELIEVE THAT IF THEY THREW IN WITH "CENTRO DEMOCRATICO:"

-- THE SOCIALIST WOULD BE STRENGTHENED AT THE EXPENSE OF THE CENTER BY BEING ABLE CREDIBLY TO CLAIM THAT THEY WERE THE ONLY DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITIONISTS TO MAINTAIN A PRINCIPLED ANTI-REGIME STAND TO THE END;

-- AT THE SAME TIME, THIS MOVEMENT OF THE TEAM TO THE RIGHT WOULD RESULT IN THE SOCIALISTS BEING MORE ISOLATED ON THE LEFT WITH THE COMMUNISTS, AND MORE TEMPTED TO PURSUE MITTERAND'S STRATEGY OF A UNION OF THE LEFT;

-- FINALLY, LOOKING TO THE POST-ELECTIONS PERIOD AND THE COUNTRY'S WORSENING ECONOMIC SITUATION, VAZQUEZ SAW THE TEAM BETTER ABLE TO ACT AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE CENTER AND THE LEFT IN PURSUIT OF A NEEDED "SOCIAL PACT" IF IT MAINTAINED ITS UNMISTAKEABLE ANTI-REGIME AND NON-GOVT IDENTITY.

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PAGE 03 MADRID 00665 271821Z

4. CANELLAS SAW THE GOVT ATTEMPTING TO PROMOTE A FRENCH-TYPE MODEL, WITH FRAGA'S "ALIANZA POPULAR" PLAYING THE ROLE OF THE GAULLISTS, THE "CENTRO DEMOCRATICO" REPRESENTING A MAJORITY "GISCARDIST" FORCE TO SUAREZ' GISCARD, AND THE SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS BEING LEFT TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES (WITH THE CONCOMITANT UNDERSIRABLE TENDENCY TOWARD A UNION OF THE LEFT). BECAUSE "CENTRO DEMOCRATICO" WAS VIEWED AS A GOVT-PROMOTED OPERATION, CANELLAS SAID THAT THE ATMOSPHERE WITHIN THE OPPOSITION'S COMMITTEE OF NINE, ON WHICH HE IS THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATIVE, HAD IN RECENT DAYS BECOME AS ANTI-"CENTRO DEMOCRATICO" AS IT WAS ANTI-"ALIANZA POPULAR."

5. AT THE SAME TIME, CANELLAS WAS HIGHLY COMPLIMENTARY OF THE GOVT'S OVERALL PERFORMANCE, INCLUDING OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS OF TENSION. DURING THE MONDAY MEETING BETWEEN SUAREZ AND THE OPPOSITION'S SECOND MINI-COMMISSION, HE SAID SUAREZ, THOUGH OBVIOUSLY CONCERNED, WAS CALM, CONFIDENT, AND DECISIVE. ALTHOUGH THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE

OF THE MEETING HAD BEEN TO DISCUSS THE ELECTORAL LAW, IT ACTUALLY WAS GIVEN VERY SHORT SHRIFT, WITH ALMOST ALL OF THE LENGTHY SESSION DEVOTED TO A CONSIDERATION OF THE PUBLIC ORDER SITUATION AND ITS RAMIFICATIONS. CANELLAS CHARACTERIZED THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS AS HIGHLY POSITIVE.

6. COMMENT: GIL ROBLES' INSISTENCE OF THE MAINTENANCE OF A TWO-SIDED POLITICAL CENTER (MADRID 9692) APPEARS TO HAVE CARRIED THE DAY WITHIN THE CD TEAM. THIS LEAVES A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS UNANSWERED, HOWEVER, INCLUDING WHERE THE FSD, ITSELF APPARENTLY DIVIDED ON THE ISSUE, WILL COME OUT (FERNANDEZ ORDONEZ HAS TOLD US THAT IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR FSD TO JOIN THE "CENTRO DEMOCRATICO" IF RUIZ GIMENEZ DID NOT COME ALONG), AND WHAT THIS MEANS FOR ALVAREZ DE MIRANDA'S PPDC, NOW WITH ONE FOOT IN EACH OF TWO POLITICAL VEHICLES (THE CD TEAM AND THE "CENTRO DEMOCRATICO") WHICH ARE MOVING
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PAGE 04 MADRID 00665 271821Z

OFF IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS. STABLER

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Message Attributes

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